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NEW BOOKS REVIEWED

SOCIAL STUDIES OF THE WAR. By Elmer T. Clark, Litt. D. New York: George H. Doran Company.

There are two sides to the moral lesson taught by the war. While unsuspected resources of heroism have been revealed, depths of depravity have been laid bare. And perhaps the most important effect that the war can produce upon men's minds is just this new conception of human nature as a thing of tremendous height and depth. In a sense, the religious view of human life has been forced upon a world that has been but mildly religious and far from theological in its usual mode of thought. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a great book precisely because it realizes with dramatic intensity the struggle between good and evil in ordinary life. And now, by a tremendous object-lesson, we are being made to realize that the battle with Apollyon is unavoidable and more bitter than we had supposed; that the wickedness of Vanity Fair is viler than we had imagined.

According to Dr. Clark, several of the Entente countries have been, during the war, fairly inundated with vice. Though little supported by documentary or statistical evidence, and hence open to incredulity as containing elements of exaggeration or hearsay, the author's statements upon this subject are impressive. Dr. Clark has had ample opportunities to make observations and to receive inside information. Nor does he strike one as, in the least, an alarmist or a sensationalist. His words point to a condition that, in England, has been, to some extent already bruited. The social evil, it would appear, has increased enormously—especially in England, in France, and in Italy; it has got beyond all bounds; it is open and shameless. What is worse, unnatural vice—vice said to have been propagated by German agents, and then made an instrument of blackmail—has spread frightfully. Doubtless, there is something of hysteria in these reports. But there is nothing hysterical about Dr. Clark, and to him the whole situation seems exceedingly grave.

Over against this evil condition may be set an actual religious uplift. "In a real sensé," testifies Dr. Clark, "in spite of unmorality and anti-ecclesiasticism, the war has given birth to the God-idea. And this insures the perpetuation of religion." Nay, more; "out of the changing order there seems destined to issue a more vital religious faith than anything we have ever known before."

What, then, are we to do in the light of this new conception of humanity, this enlarged vision of sin and of heroic virtue? Qualities

better than military gallantry or disciplined bravery have been evoked by the struggle; but if the worst vices generally prevalent among American fighting men are cigarette-smoking, swearing, and bad grammar, moral looseness of an infinitely worse sort appears to have flourished elsewhere. What sort of adjustment should be made to this anomalous and challenging situation?

Dr. Clark's point of view seems to be that of one who believes that the natural and proper instruments of reform are the churches. This view is perhaps too narrow. The whole problem, though not too big for religion, is conceivably too big for the churches. For the churches, as human organizations, are just one of the forms of endeavor that religion inspires.

Doubtless the churches need admonishing. Dr. Clark makes it appear that they have conspicuously failed to check vice. Chaplains at the front have winked at immorality, and have adopted a lower moral standard than the inner sense of the men has approved. In welfare work, too, the churches have been less efficient than the lay organizations. But if the churches have really lost spiritual leadership, advice to them to regain it seems only a very indirect answer to the general ethical problem.

Probably Dr. Clark's suggestions are wise. Though controversy is not just what the present situation demands, the author, speaking the truth as he sees it, may legitimately conceive that he is doing good by arguing that the Papacy has not gained in repute during the war, and by urging the Catholic Church to give up the idea of temporal headship. Among the Protestant churches a simplified and vivified theology is certainly to be wished for. If premillenarianism and that sort of thing is nearly so prevalent as Dr. Clark indicates, there is a world of misdirected religious thinking among the masses. And the suggestion that theology must be "harmonized with sociology" is undoubtedly good, if rightly understood. But only if rightly understood. For the *preaching* of sociology has seldom proved satisfactory; it rather easily becomes the preaching of socialism or of pacifism or of sociological doctrine too doubtful for practical use. And, then, too, sociology seems to have a singular power to absorb and dissolve theology; we are already perhaps too much inclined to think that the "God-idea" and the humanitarian idea are identical.

Dr. Clark's ideas seem to need further explication. But, supposing them adequately explained, do they not fall considerably short of the larger mark at which constructive suggestion should be aimed? Is the church the right institution, for example, to teach the brute facts about vice, to re-educate and reinstate prostitutes and drunkards, to secure the right relation between employer and employed? The "church" as religion in action, as the unofficial and mystical union of all religiously minded men could do these things and more; for the church in this sense is simply morally inspired humanity. But for such tasks the churches, as instruments, seem, to speak bluntly, indifferently fitted.

The fire that "we cannot kindle when we will" has been burning brightly "over there." It appears to have been kindled and kept alive not by the churches but by the war. The pressing question is how to canalize and employ the new energy. Men need causes to fight for

as good as that of winning the war; they need a simpler sense of duty in ordinary life, a better adjustment of potential virtue to obvious duty. To meet this need, heart-work and head-work are required of all persons and of all agencies: the war lesson needs to be learned by the schools, the press, and the theatre; by the corporations and by the labor unions. Doubtless there is power in Christianity to unify all these forms of activity, and Christianity is even now unifying them. But can the churches at present do this work? Without in the least denying the power of religion, one may suggest that a good deal of preliminary work must be done by other agencies before the church can get the full benefit of the emergent moral impulse. A church that cannot solve the labor problem—because it is not a storehouse of wisdom about labor—will suffer from ethical bewilderment as much as any other group—until the labor problem is solved.

NEW SCHOOLS FOR OLD. By Evelyn Dewey. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company.

We can have new schools for old if we want them. The thing needed is simply the individual will to think intelligently and to work devotedly. But what one invariably finds when one investigates backward institutions like the country church or the country school is that extremely little "common sense" (moral intelligence) has been applied to the situation; remarkably little moral effort has been made. The kind of "sense" that enables people to make the most of small means for a worthy end and so to achieve results that seem astonishing cannot be taught by lectures; it cannot be produced by circularizing people; it cannot be bought. It works by example, by demonstration; it works from within and leavens a community. And within the community moral intelligence always seems to do its work effectually. We are invariably surprised when we hear of such results as those accomplished by Mrs. Marie Turner Harvey in the school of Porter, Missouri. Yet it is hardly an exaggeration to say that such experiments always succeed. A person who wants to labor for his fellows need not be a genius, nor even an expert. All experience seems to show that a vast number of human problems can be solved by good intelligence, inspired—yes, actually uplifted and made keener—by unselfish purpose. This fails only when the problem involves rare intellectual difficulties, such as require the mind of a statesman or a specialist. And the assistance of the specialist, at least, can usually be had.

The Porter School is in the northern part of Missouri, in a district that lies next to the city of Kirksville. A few years ago it had a one-room school that was as bad as bad could be—unhygienic, ill-equipped, inefficient. Now it has a one-room school that is a marvel of suitability to its environment. Mrs. Harvey, an experienced rural teacher who had charge of a model country school in connection with the State Normal School at Kirksville, accomplished the change. Her model school, she knew, did not fit the conditions of any particular community, and it did draw pupils from Porter, thus encouraging the drift away from country life; and so she resolved to try an experiment *in situ*. To this experiment she devoted not merely a part of her mind—her specialized knowledge—but her whole self. And while she gave